A CHRISTIAN NEWSLETTER ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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This Newsletter is prepared by the staff to provide information on current issues. Viewpoints expressed in it should not necessarily be regarded as the policy of the Department or of the National Council of Churches.

Volume 2, Number 9 $1.00 per year December, 1954

"THE COURAGE TO BE PATIENT"

It is the earnest prayer of Christians that divine guidance may be given the President and his colleagues as they wrestle with the problem of preserving the peace and security of the United States. Many critical issues press for solution. There are many provocations on the world front. Christians pray that in this period of tension the decisions reached by the President will be dictated by considerations of justice and honor for our nation and by a desire to strengthen the moral and political foundations of world order.

In the light of these concerns Christians will do well to study the transcript of President Eisenhower's memorable press conference of December 2. What was said by the President on this occasion should be required reading by clergymen and laymen throughout the country. The following quotes are particularly deserving of attention:

"Let us recognize that we owe it to ourselves and to the world to explore every possible peaceable means of settling differences before we even think of such a thing as war.

"And the hard way is to have the courage to be patient, tirelessly to seek out every single avenue open to us in the hope even finally of leading the other side to a little better understanding of the honesty of our intentions."

"I just want to say one word about the idea of blockade. It is possible that a blockade is conceivable without war. I have never read of it historically."

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"So far as I am concerned, if ever we come to a place that I feel that a step of war is necessary, it is going to be brought about not by any impulsive individualistic act of my own, but I am going before the Congress in the constitutional method set up in this country, and lay the problem before them, with my recommendation as to whatever it may be."

"On our side we must make certain that our efforts to promote peace are not interpreted as appeasement or any purchase of immediate favor at the cost of principle, but we must, on the other hand, be steady and refuse to be goaded into actions that would be unwise."

At many points the President took a position consistent with that advocated by the churches. Our churches reject the view that a third world war is inevitable; that a so-called "preventive war" would achieve a just and lasting peace. Christians generally will support the President's view that "we owe it to ourselves and to the world to explore every possible peaceable means of settling differences before we even think of such a thing as war."

The National Council of Churches believes and has said that our nation must not close the door to international negotiations. Many disappointments and frustrations have attended past efforts to negotiate with the nations embraced within the Soviet orbit. Despite this fact the churches believe that in the face of the most exasperating opposition our nation must persist in honest negotiations as the method of settling international disputes.

The President is to be commended for his courage to be patient. Decisions respecting American foreign policy affect profoundly for good or ill, not only our own people, but untold millions of God's children throughout the world. In this atomic age when resort can be had to nuclear weapons capable of destroying our civilization, it has become more urgent than ever before that the United States exercise its power with wisdom and restraint.

Will those readers of the Newsletter who share the views expressed above, write a supporting letter to the President, and to the Secretary of State? This is important. How else are the leaders of government to know that the people of our churches also have the courage to be patient?

"THE GOOD PARTNER"

An important inter-American conference has been in session in Rio de Janeiro. President Eisenhower, in a message to the Meeting of Ministers of Finance and Economy of the 21 American Republics, called upon the delegates to join with the United States "in common dedication to the policy of the Good Partner."

There was a time when the United States was regarded by the Latin Americans as the "colossus of the North." Then followed the era of the "Good Neighbor." The President now points to the era of partnership. Speaking of the relationships which have developed among the peoples of the Western Hemisphere the President said: "As these relationships evolved and grew, the people of the United States learned to call their own attitude toward their sister nations the policy of the Good Neighbor. Today, the bonds which unite us as sovereign equals who work side by side for the betterment of all of us - nations and citizens - have elevated this neighborly relationship to one of genuine partnership."

An excellent idea. But if this idea is to come alive greater thought must be given to the cultural and economic, as well as the political aspects of partnership.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL'S MESSAGE

The Boston Assembly of the National Council of Churches approved for issuance to the churches a message entitled "The Power and Unity of Our Faith."

One of the major sections of the Message had to do with the role of the churches in relation to society.

"We must," said the National Council, "continue to press vigorously for fair practices in our public life, for the right of the accused to face the accuser, and for the preservation of those freedoms which are our cherished heritage. We must be alert to reject any programs or policies in our corporate life which tend toward undue regimentation of individuals, the domination of a philosophy of brute force or materialism in our national life, and the encroachment of undemocratic methods upon our liberties."

"The fundamental opposition to communism comes from the Christian Church. Across the world, totalitarian and tyrannical systems have found in it their most unyielding barrier. In our own country our churches have been united in opposition to the attitudes, conditions, and practices that encourage communism. We reject communism because of its atheism, its disregard of the rights of the individual, its misunderstanding of the nature of man and of society, and its inherent tyranny."

Turning to certain of the pressing problems related to the search for world justice and peace the National Council said: "We believe that our Government should continue to support the United Nations. The churches in every land have a special responsibility to further the achievement of universal disarmament and the constructive use of atomic power. We believe that the common people everywhere want peace and the churches under God should be their voice.

"We should share with our fellow men our material goods and technical skills, wherever possible, assist those who are homeless or stateless, and always hold them before the throne of God in prayer."

AN ATOMIC "MARSHALL PLAN."

The churches supported the Marshall Plan for European Recovery. They did this in the belief that a stronger Europe would reduce the likelihood of a general war. They were right.

The proposal has now been made for an "Atomic Marshall Plan." John Jay Hopkins, Chairman of the General Dynamics Corporation and builder of the two atomic submarines Nautilus and Sea Wolf, in a speech before the National Association of Manufacturers, called for a 100-year program for the financing and construction of atomic reactors in those areas of the world short of power, food, water, and life.

A breath-taking proposal. Not by an idealistic preacher, but by a business man with vast experience in the world of economic realities. Mr. Hopkins would have American private enterprise and the American Government, working together with friendly national governments and their own private enterprises, launch an atomic energy program "to increase the living standards of underdeveloped and politically unstable nations. . . ." He envisioned "a humanitarian program of massive atomic creation in contrast to the threat of massive atomic destruction."

With the experience of the European Recovery Program behind us it should be crystal clear to all and sundry that the surest way to prevent Asia going Communist is to strengthen the economy of Asians through some such proposal as that advocated by Mr. Hopkins.

CHRISTIAN WORLD RESPONSIBILITIES

The Honorable Lester B. Pearson, Canadian Minister of State for External Affairs, and Dr. Charles Malik, Ambassador of the Republic of Lebanon to the United States were among the distinguished churchmen to address the Boston Assembly of the National Council of Churches.

Here are two quotes that will interest readers of the Newsletter:

Lester B. Pearson: "Among other things, the gardener knows the value of patience, the absence of which is so dangerous in international politics. Patience is not weakness, and should not be lost if in today's difficult and complex diplomatic problems we are unable to achieve spectacular victories, or sudden, and clear-cut solutions; the kind for which we have a passion because decisiveness has been the keystone of so much material advance on this continent. To the extent that this need for patience is inadequately understood, public opinion in democracies may tend to make self-defeating demands on its own political servants. Or even worse, force them into rash and unwise actions."

"An arrogant Pharisaism and smug satisfaction with one's own superior righteousness in a person or in a nation, are not only unamiable qualities, they are not conducive to clear political judgment. He whose humility and moral sensitivity is least highly developed, is most likely to confuse principle with questions of fact or expediency, and to make an easy subconscious identification of his own viewpoint with the cause of right.

"Furthermore, self-righteousness in international affairs is likely to lead to rigidity of thought and intolerance of other views. This often prevents a wise understanding of complex and changing situations; and tends to make diplomacy captive and inflexible."

"Patience and strength, prudence and vision are four qualities which should guide our policies and our diplomacy as we move forward, steadily and relentlessly, in the search for a peace which will rest on something firmer and more lasting than force.

"The penalty of failure in this search is not pleasant to contemplate, for it would be a war beside which all others would pale into insignificance. It would be a war from which no one could escape; a war which would bring home to us in awesome and terrible fashion, something that has long been evident to religious insight, the oneness of all men."

"To debate such a question as whether co-existence is desirable or not, seems an idle occupation. There may be only one answer, either co-existence or no existence.

"The dread and chilling facts of hydrogen warfare are grounds, not for panic, but for ensuring that we do everything that we possibly can do to convert a co-existence which we cannot escape into a co-operation which will be more than a propaganda slogan and something better than the co-operation between Jonah and the whale."

"We should not, in my view, refuse any offer to negotiate any difference with anybody; unless that offer is obviously insincere, or designed merely to delay and frustrate policies on which we have embarked and which we are convinced are right.

"Such a policy of negotiation -- which is neither a confession of weakness and need not involve any betrayal of principle - becomes easier as the free world becomes stronger and more united. For we should not forget that our growing strength is not

an end in itself but a means to an end; namely, the solution of international problems by peaceful means and the easing of international tensions."

Charles Malik: "Those who call themselves Christian, who love Jesus Christ above everything else, have great responsibilities in the world today. With the world and in the world, they must carry the cross of all its troubles, not indeed as though they have attained victory themselves, but rejoicing in the victory which Christ accomplished for them and for the world. And this victory, wrought for us and for the world without any of us having been consulted, will certainly be completely revealed one day, both in our individual lives and in history."

"The Christian then cannot live outside the world. Its problems are his problems, and if he is at the same time a citizen of another world, another kingdom, he still loves this world -- albeit with infinite sadness -- in which he is thrust, and he will be second to none in struggling for its salvation from within. The allegiance of the Christian to earth, then, is as real, as genuine, as that of any other person.

"The responsible Christian cannot evade the absolute duty of understanding the total nature of the Communist challenge, which perhaps those of us who come from the intermediate world between Communism and the West and who live, think and work at the front line of the great world struggle feel most keenly. The Christian's calm analysis should reveal to him at what ultimate roots -- on the economic, the political, the military, and, above all, the intellectual and spiritual level -- this challenge strikes. And at these several levels the challenge must be honestly faced, refuted and overcome. For in drawing up the twenty or so fundamental tenets of his faith, the Christian will find that Marx and his school consciously and voluptuously repudiate every one of them. It is then a struggle to the death with Communism. But this should not in any way blind the Christian to the political, economic and social evils and injustices throughout the world which Communism, whether sincerely or hypocritically, makes so much of. Nor can it possibly make him obtuse with respect to any honest and real possibilities of 'peaceful coexistence' -- a tremendous issue -- in a world in which atomic war might mean not so much the defeat of Communism as the destruction of everything."

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

President Eisenhower, on August 7, 1953, signed into law the Refugee Relief Act of 1953. Under this legislation 209,000 refugees were to receive non-quota visas to the United States.

Some churchmen have criticized the Government for the slowness with which this legislation is being implemented. This criticism is justified. But the churches, too, have been slow in securing the assurances necessary to entry into the United States of the approximately 100,000 persons who look to the Protestant and Orthodox churches for help.

The Boston Assembly of the National Council of Churches appealed to the churches "to give full and prompt support to their denominational agencies and to the Department of Church World Service by providing all possible resettlement opportunities for the homeless and oppressed who look to our Christian churches for Assurances. . . ."

The time is NOW to press in each church and in each Council of Churches for Assurances. For information write to Roland Elliott, Director of Immigration Services, Department of Church World Service, 215 Fourth Avenue, New York 3, N.Y.

PUTTING THE ATOM TO WORK FOR PEACE

The atom is going to work -- for peace.

The November Newsletter carried an analysis of the atoms-for-peace proposal then before the Political and Security Committee of the UN.

The General Assembly, on December 4, by a unanimous vote, adopted a resolution endorsing the atoms-for-peace program. The hope was expressed that the proposed international atomic energy agency would be established without delay.

The Soviet Union, in one of those rare instances of unanimity, supported the UN resolution endorsing the atoms-for-peace program. Prior to its final action the General Assembly rejected two Soviet amendments. The first of these amendments would make the international atomic energy agency responsible to the Security Council, as well as to the General Assembly. James J. Wadsworth, United States delegate charged that such action would "shackle this agency with the abuses of the veto." This view prevailed by a vote of 43 to 5 with 11 abstentions.

The second Soviet amendment would have broadened the basis of participation in the projected international scientific conference, to include nations not now members of the UN and the Specialized Agencies. This amendment was rejected by a vote of 46 to 6, with 18 abstentions.

With these amendments out of the way the General Assembly, as already indicated, unanimously supported the idea of putting the atom to work for peace. Said the President of the General Assembly, Dr. Eelco van Kleffens, "the entire world will rejoice."

One of the first steps to be taken under the UN resolution will be the issuance of a call to the members of the UN and of its Specialized Agencies to participate in an international scientific conference "to study the development of atomic power and to consider other technical areas - such as biology, medicine, radiation protection and fundamental science - in which international cooperation might most effectively be accomplished."

A word of caution is in order. The Soviet Union has let it be known that while it endorsed the core principle of the UN action, it would continue to press for the essentials of its amendments, already rejected by the General Assembly. This could mean a period of prolonged delay in getting the program under way. It was announced in Washington, on December 6, that diplomatic conversations with the Soviet Union would be continued "on a confidential basis."

Also, given the best possible intentions by all parties concerned, many years will elapse before atomic power for peaceful purposes can be produced at a cost low enough to ensure its use on a global scale. But a start has been made. General Romulo of the Philippines put the matter graphically when he said the 100 kilograms of fissionable materials pledged by the United States meant that it was "ready to cast the equivalent of some ten Hiroshima-type bombs into the arena of peace through the atom."

SPECIAL NOTICE

As we go to press the 1954 General Assembly of the United Nations is approaching adjournment. The January issue of the Newsletter will feature an article evaluating the more important of the many actions taken by the General Assembly.

SHARING SKILLS THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS

The American churches are deeply committed to the Technical Assistance operations of the UN. Time and again church bodies such as the National Council of Churches and various denominational assemblies have said that wherever and whenever possible technical assistance to the peoples of the less developed areas should be made available under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Fifth United Nations Technical Assistance Conference was held at the UN headquarters in late November. It was announced that:

a) The UN, together with its specialized Agencies, assigned close to 2,000 experts of all nationalities to help improve living and working conditions in more than 70 countries on all continents.

b) During 1954 approximately 23 million dollars were spent to finance technical aid projects. These contributions ranged from $1,429 offered by Monaco to $13,861,809 pledged by the United States.

c) 56 governments had pledged a total of $12,264,136 for the 1955 operations of the program. This total falls short of the more than 25 million pledged by 73 governments for the 1954 program.

18 countries which contributed last year to the expanded program of technical assistance were unable now to make pledges for 1955. Included in this latter group is the United States. However, the U.S. representative, Senator H. Alexander Smith spoke of his Government's "continuous interest, at the highest levels" and pointed out that President Eisenhower was prepared to ask the United States Congress for a contribution.

Dr. Eelco van Kleffens, President of the General Assembly told the Conference delegates that the UN program of technical assistance "is one of the most constructive enterprises ever initiated jointly by the great majority of nations." It was, he said, the best expression of the vision of those who, in signing the UN Charter, pledged themselves to promote social progress and better standards of living, in larger freedom.

Christians generally will endorse this view. They will await action by Congress respecting the American contribution for 1955. It would seem that, at the very least, the U.S. will wish to approximate if not exceed its contribution of 1954. Especially since many countries have stepped up their appropriations for 1955. Costa Rica has increased its contribution from 6 to 7 thousand dollars; the United Kingdom from $1,820,000 to $2,240,000; France from $1,207,000 to $1,448,000. Cambodia, which did not contribute to the 1954 program, has offered $2,000 for 1955. What will the United States do?

WHAT CAN I DO FOR PEACE?

This question is often asked. One answer to this question is for each person to make known his views on international issues. The question is then raised: But who cares for my opinion? The President cares. And the Secretary of State. And the members of Congress.

The State Department has issued a pamphlet that bears upon this matter of opinion in a democracy. Your Opinion Counts, is a 12-page booklet designed to "help stimulate greater participation by individual Americans and organizations in an exchange of views and information with the Department of State" (Pub. 5606, 10 cents.)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Day was observed on December 10. On that day, in many lands, including the United States, formal recognition was given the many advances on the human rights front achieved through the United Nations.

These festivities were of special interest to the churches. It was at the 1945 Conference on the Churches and World Order where a resolution was approved calling for the establishment of a Commission on Human Rights as a part of the structure of the UN. Such a Commission was created. Since that time the churches, with prayerful interest, have watched the steady progress made in establishing and safeguarding the rights and freedoms of all men everywhere.

The United Nations Reporter for December catalogs certain of these gains including the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the drafting of two Covenants on Human Rights, one of which deals with civil and political rights, and one with economic, social, and cultural rights; the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. It was announced that a third international agreement, the Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons was approved by a special United Nations Conference attended by 27 countries.

The Convention on the Political Rights of Women repudiates discrimination because of sex in the field of political rights. It recognizes the right of women to vote and to hold public office, and to exercise all public functions established by national law on equal terms with men. This Convention, thus far, has been signed by 39 countries and ratified, or acceded to by 17 countries.

The Convention on the Status of Refugees calls upon the signatory states to recognize human rights and fundamental freedoms for refugees and to grant them, in certain fields, the same rights as those enjoyed by their nationals and, in other fields, the rights enjoyed by most favored aliens in general. This Convention has been signed by 20 countries, and ratified by 12.

Surely an impressive record and proof of the fact that the UN is an agency through which the rights and dignity of man are regarded as a primary concern of the world community.

OF INTEREST

* The 4th in a series of overseas exhibits designed to acquaint the peoples of other nations with the U.S. policy for peaceful use of atomic energy has been opened at Brussels, Belgium, the U. S. Information Agency has announced.

* The United States and Turkey have signed an agreement providing for the procurement of about 500,000 tons of wheat and feed grains urgently needed in Turkey to replenish the grain shortages caused by recent crop failures.